

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 PM-03 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7077

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 00611

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, IN, NP

SUBJECT: INDIAN-NEPALESE RELATIONS

REF: KATHMANDU 72

SUMMARY: INDIANS SEEM IRRITATED WITH NEPALESE KING'S BEHAVIOR, THOUGH BRITISH OFFICIAL DOUBTS THEY HAVE ANY INTENTION TO DO SOMETHING SERIOUS ABOUT IT. END SUMMARY.

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1. ON JANUARY 11 WE DISCUSSED INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS

WITH FCO SOUTH ASIAN DEPT. HEAD CHALMERS, LEADING OFF WITH GENERAL CONCLUSIONS OF REFTEL. CHALMERS THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN SOME DETERIORATION IN INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH NEPAL, AS WELL AS VICE VERSA, SINCE THE TEMPORARY IMPROVEMENT AT TIME OF KING BIRENDRA'S VISIT TO INDIA LAST YEAR. WHILE INDIANS APPRECIATE KING'S DIFFICULTIES, THEY ARE DISAPPOINTED WITH HIS BEHAVIOR AND FEEL HE MAY BE GETTING A BIT TOO BIG FOR HIS BOOTS. INDIANS FEEL HE SHOULD MAKE MORE USE OF HIS BUREAUCRACY RATHER THAN BYPASS IT, AND WISH HE WOULD BRING MORE REPRESENTATIVE ELEMENTS INTO GOVERNMENT.

2. BEYOND THAT, HOWEVER, CHALMERS TOLD US HE DOUBTED INDIANS ARE TRYING FUNNY BUSINESS. NEPALESE ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON INDIA IS NOT OF INDIA'S SEEKING. INDIANS REPEATEDLY URGE BRITISH, AMERICANS, AND OTHERS TO ASSIST NEPAL. (UK CANNOT AFFORD SUCH AID, CHALMERS ADDED.)

3. MAIN INDIAN CONCERN IS IN NEPAL AS BUFFER VISAVIS CHINA, CHALMERS SAID, AND THAT IS IN EFFECT NEPAL'S BEST PROTECTION IN LONG RUN.

4. AS TO APPOINTMENT OF NEW INDIAN AMBASSADOR RASGOTRA (WHO WAS PREVIOUSLY DEPUTY HICOMER IN LONDON) CHALMERS OPINED THAT HIS HAWKISH PAST DURING PREVIOUS TOUR IN NEPAL, AND ON NEPALESE AFFAIRS IN NEW DELHI, IS NOT NECESSARILY AN INDICATOR THAT HE WILL ACT IN SIMILARLY HARD MANNER WITH NEPALESE THIS TIME ROUND. CHALMERS SAID RASGOTRA IS SAVVY, AMBITIOUS DIPLOMAT WHO WILL DO WHAT HE IS TOLD. HE WILL BE HAWKISH ONLY IF INSTRUCTED TO (THOUGH CHALMERS AGREED THAT CHOICE OF PREVIOUSLY HAWKISH RASGOTRA MAY BE INDICATION OF CURRENT INDIAN FEELINGS TOWARD NEPAL).

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